

Ms. Christi Fraga, Board Member

SUBJECT: ELECTROCARDIOGRAM (EKG/ECG) SCREENINGS FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS) STUDENTS

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC

PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED, & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is the abrupt loss of heart function, breathing and consciousness. The condition usually results from a problem with the heart's electrical system, which disrupts the heart's pumping action and stops blood flow to the body. Cardiac conditions cannot be diagnosed exclusively with a stethoscope. Diagnosing such conditions require tests, such as an EKG/ECG with results read by a cardiologist.

SCA is a leading cause of death in the United States. An estimated 382,800 people experience SCA in the United States each year. Approximately 92% of those who experience SCA do not survive. Cardiac conditions in young people often shows no symptoms, the first indicator is usually death. Warning signs are usually not recognized or identified as indicators of a cardiac condition.

SCA is rare in young people, but it can happen. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 2,000 young, healthy people under age 25 in the United States die each year from SCA. These deaths leave behind a devastating impact on families and communities. But there are ways to help identify risk factors that can help prevent these tragedies.

At the School Board meeting of April 17, 2013, Mr. Carlos L. Curbelo, School Board Member, proffered Board Item (Revised Replacement) H-16, proposing a Resolution honoring Ms. Maruchi Mendez, the co-founder of JunTos Foundation, a non-profit organization devoted to helping children and families who were experiencing terminal and life-threatening illnesses. Ms. Mendez's son Ramiro "Toti" Mendez, passed away on April 2, 2000, at the age of twenty, a victim of sudden cardiac death caused by undetected cardiomyopathy. Since Toti's death, Ms. Mendez has dedicated her efforts to campaign for high school and college athletes to receive proper medical screenings and testing, including an electrocardiogram (EKG/ECG), before participating in sports.

At the School Board meeting of July 17, 2013, Mr. Curbelo proffered Board Item H-4, directing the Superintendent to conduct a feasibility study on testing student-athletes for heart disease. Two years later, at the School Board meeting of August 5, 2015, Dr. Larry Feldman, School Board Member, proffered Board Item H-4, recognizing the EKG screening program for student-athletes at Nicklaus Children's Hospital, and Dr. Anthony Rossi, who is currently Nicklaus Children's Pediatric Specialists Director of Research, Section of Cardiovascular Medicine. At the School Board meeting of August 10, 2016, during New Business, Dr. Feldman reminded parents that Nicklaus Children's Hospital, formerly Miami Children's Hospital, were offering free EKGs to students of Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Subsequently, at the School Board meeting of August 9, 2017, during New Business, Dr. Feldman again informed parents, and families about the free EKG screening program for student-athletes, offered by Nicklaus Children's Hospital. At that time, the hospital had screened 14,000 children, six hundred were identified as having abnormal EKG's, of which nine underwent medical procedures.

The numerous Board Items and discussions during New Business, previously addressed by Board members, related to EKG screenings are extensive, and illustrate the critical and urgent attention that Sudden Cardiac Arrest requires, and when detected, may prove to be preventable. It is prudent to examine, with fidelity, the feasibility of the District implementing a sustainable EKG/ECG screening program for Miami-Dade County Public School students. Proper screening and testing may prevent the tragic death of children.

This agenda item seeks the Board's approval to direct the Superintendent to explore the feasibility of identifying, establishing, and/or encouraging partnerships with local medical providers and/or organizations to deliver heart screening services, specifically, but not limited to EKG/ECG to students at no cost; consider establishing and implementing a pilot program to administer EKG/ECG heart screenings to a select group of students for the 2022-2023 school year, and to establish an aspirational goal, of expanding EKG/ECG screenings at no cost to students, in elementary, K-8 centers, middle, and senior high schools for the 2023-2024 school year.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney's office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. CHRISTI FRAGA:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to:

1. explore the feasibility of identifying, establishing, and/or affirming partnerships with local medical providers and/or organizations to deliver heart screening services, specifically, but not limited to EKG/ECG at no cost to students;
2. consider establishing and implementing a pilot program to administer EKG/ECG heart screenings to a select group of students for the 2022-2023 school year;
3. establish an aspirational goal, of the feasibility of expanding EKG/ECG heart screenings at no cost to students, in elementary, K-8 centers, middle, and senior high schools for the 2023-2024 school year;
4. provide parents/guardians of students who undergo heart screening, with the results; and
5. Provide an update of specific recommendations at the Personnel, Student, School & Community Support Committee meeting on July 13, 2022.